United Nations ST/AI/2006/5

Secretariat

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Administrative instruction

Excess baggage, shipments and insurance

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, and for the purpose of implementing staff rules 107.21, 107.22, 107.27, 207.20, 207.21, 307.6 and 307.7, hereby promulgates the following:

I. Excess baggage

Section 1
Conditions of entitlement

1.1 Staff members shall be entitled to payment of the cost of accompanied excess baggage, in respect of themselves and their eligible family members in accordance with the provisions of staff rules 107.21 (b), 207.20 (b) and 307.6 (b) for one bag in addition to their free baggage allowance or up to 25 kilograms per traveller.

1.2 Charges for excess baggage beyond the limits provided for in the above-mentioned staff rules and the present instruction shall not be reimbursable unless, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, the circumstances under which the staff member is travelling are of a sufficiently exceptional and compelling nature to warrant such reimbursement.

1.3 When necessary, a cash advance against a staff member's excess baggage entitlement may be authorized at his or her request.

Section 2
Conversion of excess baggage to unaccompanied shipment

2.1 Staff members who are entitled under staff rules 107.21 and 207.20 both to accompanied excess baggage and an unaccompanied shipment to the same destination may forgo the excess baggage entitlement for themselves and their eligible family members in return for an increase by an equivalent weight in their entitlement to unaccompanied shipment, whether by air or surface means of transport.

2.2 The provisions in section 2.1 above shall not apply when the baggage allowance for any portion of the journey is calculated by airlines on the basis of pieces and size of baggage.

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Section 3
Conversion to excess baggage of unaccompanied shipment on home leave, family visit or education grant travel

When a staff member has an entitlement to an unaccompanied shipment of 50 kilograms or 0.31 cubic metres for home leave, family visit or education grant travel under staff rule 107.21 (g) (i) or 207.20 (h) (i), that entitlement may be converted into an additional 10 kilograms of accompanied excess baggage.

Section 4
Claims and requests relating to excess baggage

Claims for reimbursement of excess baggage charges, requests for a cash advance against an excess baggage entitlement and accounting for the use of such advance, requests for conversion of excess baggage to unaccompanied shipment and for conversion of unaccompanied shipment to excess baggage under the provisions of the present instruction shall be made in accordance with the procedures set out in the information circular on excess baggage, shipments and insurance.

II. Shipments

Section 5
Shipment entitlements

5.1 A staff member's shipment entitlements shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of staff rules 107.21, 107.27, 207.20 and 307.6 and the provisions of the present instruction.

5.2 A staff member will be considered to be within his or her entitlement if the shipment does not exceed either the weight or volume allowable under the above-mentioned staff rules.

5.3 If the shipment exceeds both the weight and volume maxima specified in the above-mentioned rules and additional charges are incurred as a result, the charges to be paid by the staff member shall be calculated on the basis of the ratio of the lesser amount of the excess net figure to the total net figure of the weight or volume shipped.

5.4 The entitlement to an unaccompanied shipment on education grant travel for the first outward journey to, and the final return journey from, an educational institution may also be authorized in cases of change of attendance to an educational institution in a different city or locality.

5.5 The entitlements to incoming and outgoing shipments on home leave, family visit and education grant travel may be combined and exercised in whole or in part as either incoming or outgoing shipment provided the total is within the combined entitlement in accordance with the provisions of staff rules 107.21 (g) (iii) and 207.20 (h) (iii).

Section 6
Personal effects and household goods

6.1 Consistent with staff rules 107.21 (c) and 207.20 (d), the expression "personal effects and household goods" for the purposes of the present instruction shall mean

effects and goods normally required for personal or household use, excluding animals and power-assisted vehicles. However, transportation of privately owned automobiles may be partially reimbursed under the provisions of section 13 of the present instruction.

6.2 Unaccompanied shipment or removal of personal effects and household goods shall be subject to the following conditions:

(a) Flammable and hazardous materials shall in no case be shipped at the expense of the Organization or be included in any shipment that it has arranged;

(b) The personal effects and household goods to be transported must be for the staff member's use or for that of his or her eligible family members;

(c) For removal shipments under staff rule 107.27, the personal effects and household goods must have been in the staff member's possession at the time of his/her appointment, change of duty station or separation, as applicable.

Section 7
Determination of weight or volume maxima

7.1 The weight or volume maxima of a staff member's shipment entitlements are determined in accordance with the provisions of staff rules 107.21 (f), 107.27 (d) (i), 207.20 (g) and 307.6 (c). When crating or lift vans are not used, but goods are packed into suitcases, cartons or trunks, the total weight or volume of the suitcases, cartons or trunks shall be considered the net weight or volume.

7.2 If the packing company cannot provide a weight or volume figure in net terms, i.e., inclusive only of packing, as well as gross terms, i.e., inclusive also of crating and lift vans, the net weight or volume shall be determined on the basis of two thirds of the gross weight or volume of the shipment. The Organization shall in no case recognize any difference between gross and net weight or volume that exceeds one third of the gross weight or volume. Should the crating exceed one third of the gross weight or volume, the difference shall be considered as part of the net shipment.

Section 8
Reimbursement of costs related to shipment

Reimbursement of costs related to the shipment shall be in accordance with the provisions of staff rules 107.21 (e), 107.27 (d) (ii), 207.20 (f) and 307.6 (c), as appropriate. The following costs shall not be payable:

(a) Import and export duties;

(b) Delivery from a storage warehouse to the staff member's residence, unless storage at United Nations expense has been authorized.

Section 9
Mode of transportation and conversion to alternative modes

9.1 Shipment shall be made by the most economical means, as determined by the Secretary-General, in which case the full entitlement provided by the Staff Rules shall apply, regardless of the mode of transportation.

9.2 When surface shipment is the most economical means of transport, conversion to air shipment may be authorized in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) On the basis of one half the weight or volume of the surface entitlement:

(i) The entire surface shipment entitlement under staff rules 107.21, 207.20 and 307.6 may be converted to air freight at the request of the staff member;

(ii) Part of the surface shipment entitlement under staff rules 107.21 and 207.20 may be converted to air freight, provided the Secretary-General determines that such partial conversion is necessary to meet urgent needs. However, no partial conversion shall be authorized for the 50 kilograms or 0.31 cubic metres shipment entitlement on home leave, family visit or education grant travel under staff rules 107.21 (g) (i) and 207.20 (h) (i);

(b) Exceptionally, the surface entitlement under staff rules 107.21, 207.20 and 307.6 may be converted to air freight on the basis of the full weight and volume:

(i) When the Secretary-General determines that there is an extraordinary risk of damage to, or loss of, a surface shipment in transit;

(ii) When a staff member is appointed or assigned to a special mission for a period expected to last six months or longer, and the Secretary-General determines that this is justified by the operational requirements of the mission;

(iii) When the normal shipping time would exceed three months, except for shipments on home leave, family visit or education grant travel under staff rules 107.21 (g) and 207.20 (h);

(c) A portion of up to 10 per cent of the surface entitlement under staff rules 107.21 (i) and 207.20 (j) may be converted to air freight on the basis of full weight or volume on appointment, on assignment of more than one year or on transfer, provided the staff member is appointed, assigned or transferred to a duty station other than a city where the headquarters of the United Nations, a specialized agency or the International Atomic Energy Agency is located. No conversion under this subsection shall be made on separation from service;

(d) If a portion of the surface shipment entitlement is converted to air freight on the basis of full weight and volume under subsection 9.2 (c) above, the remaining surface shipment entitlement may be converted to air freight on the basis of the one-half rule;

(e) When an entitlement to unaccompanied shipment as advance removal of personal effects and household goods has been converted on the basis of the one-half rule, twice the weight or volume of the air shipment shall be deducted from the staff member's removal entitlement under staff rule 107.27.

Section 10
Special entitlements at designated duty stations

Internationally recruited staff members serving at duty stations designated by the International Civil Service Commission shall have the following special entitlements in accordance with the provisions of the administrative instruction on special entitlements for staff members serving at designated duty stations:[1]

(a) An additional yearly shipment to the duty station in accordance with staff rules 107.21 (k) and 207.20 (k);

(b) An additional 50-kilogram shipment to the duty station in connection with the birth or adoption of an infant;

(c) When exercising their unaccompanied shipment entitlement of 50 kilograms or 0.31 cubic metres on home leave, family visit or education grant travel, or their alternative entitlement to increased accompanied excess baggage under section 3 of the present instruction, internationally recruited staff members serving at designated duty stations may combine the entitlements associated with both legs of the travel into one shipment.

Section 11
Relocation grant (lump-sum option for unaccompanied shipments)

11.1 On travel on appointment or assignment for one year or longer, transfer or separation from service of a staff member appointed for one year or longer, internationally recruited staff members entitled to unaccompanied shipment under staff rules 107.21, 207.20 or 307.6, as detailed above, may opt for a lump-sum payment in lieu of the entitlement. This lump-sum option shall be known as a "relocation grant".

11.2 The relocation grant shall be determined at rates for staff members with or without a spouse and/or dependent children as set out in a separate information circular.

11.3 The relocation grant is paid: upon appointment; upon each assignment or transfer; or upon separation from service. It is not subject to adjustment afterwards.

11.4 The relocation grant shall not be available on a partial basis. By opting for the relocation grant, a staff member agrees to waive the entitlement to unaccompanied shipment that would otherwise apply.

11.5 No proof on how the relocation grant is used is required. Its use is at the discretion of the staff member, in any manner deemed best to facilitate his/her relocation.

11.6 The Organization is not responsible for any delays in the arrival of personal effects or household goods or additional expenses that may be incurred or liabilities that may arise as a result of opting for the relocation grant. It is the staff member's responsibility to take out appropriate insurance. The Organization will continue to assist staff members in facilitating customs clearance and applicable import/export procedures.

Section 12
Split shipments

12.1 Shipments shall normally be made in one consignment. However, unaccompanied shipments for appointments of one year or longer under staff rules 107.21 (i) or 207.20 (j), and removal shipments under staff rule 107.27, may be split[2] when the following conditions are met:

(a) The staff member requests the shipment entitlement to be split into no more than two shipments, which must be by surface means when this is the most economical means of transport;

(b) The combined weight or volume of the two shipments does not exceed the total entitlement;

(c) The request for split shipments relates to:

(i) The entire entitlement to unaccompanied shipment or shipment on removal; or

(ii) The remaining portion of the shipment entitlement after the staff member has converted part of the surface entitlement to air freight under section 9.2 (c) of the present instruction; or

(iii) The remaining portion of the removal entitlement after a staff member has received advance shipment on removal under staff rule 107.21 (j).

12.2 Split shipments may be authorized between the following places of departure and destination:

(a) On appointment, assignment or transfer, one of the shipments must be to the initial or new duty station and may be from anywhere;

(b) On appointment, the other shipment may be from the place of recruitment to the place of home leave, or to the place where the staff member's spouse and/or dependent children reside;

(c) On assignment or transfer, the other shipment may be from the previous duty station to the new duty station, to the place of home leave or to the place where the staff member's spouse and/or dependent children reside;

(d) On separation, one of the shipments must be from the duty station, the other may be from anywhere. One of the shipments must be to the place of repatriation; the other may be to a location designated by the staff member, other than within the duty station area.

12.3 Subject to the weight and volume maxima established in staff rules 107.21 (i) or 207.20 (j) and 107.27 (d), the total cost of split shipments to be paid by the United Nations may not exceed the cost of shipping separately the actual weights or volumes of the two consignments between the single places of departure and destination, as authorized under staff rules 107.21 (d) and 207.20 (e).

12.4 In the case of special missions, split shipments may be authorized under terms and conditions established by the Secretary-General for each special mission.

12.5 Requests for split shipments shall normally be made before the staff member's departure or separation from service and not later than two months after arrival at the initial or new duty station or departure from the last duty station in the case of separation. However, where the assignment is for two years or more, the request for split shipments may be made within six months of arrival at the duty station.

Section 13
Transportation of privately owned automobiles

13.1 The cost of transporting a privately owned automobile to a duty station may be partially reimbursed to staff serving under the 100 series of the Staff Rules on initial appointment or change of duty station to an established office, and to project personnel serving under the 200 series when the following conditions are met:

(a) The appointment or assignment is for a duration expected to be two years or longer. If the initial appointment or assignment was for a lesser period, the request may be made when the initial period is extended to two years or longer;

(b) The staff member is expected to remain at the duty station for a period of not less than 18 months following the date of arrival of the automobile at the port of entry in the country of the duty station. Reimbursement may also be authorized for a newly purchased automobile arriving at a later date if the staff member can show that, at the time it was ordered, he or she was expected to remain at the duty station for a period of not less than 18 months;

(c) The duty station to which the automobile is transported is in a country or territory listed in an information circular issued for that purpose by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management;

(d) The staff member is not being provided with an automobile for both official and private use;

(e) Transportation is, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, reasonable in the circumstances. In making such determination in the case of an automobile previously in the possession of the staff member, account will be taken of such factors as the age of the automobile, the potential loss on resale if not transported and the relative price of automobiles in the locality and at the duty station.

13.2 Reimbursement shall not exceed 75 per cent of the total costs of transportation (including freight, insurance and handling charges), subject to a maximum of $1,875. In the case of a new automobile purchased at, and imported to, a duty station in a country or territory listed in the information circular referred to in subparagraph 13.1 (c) above, the demonstrable shipping costs charged by the dealer may likewise be reimbursed, provided that the costs are reasonable in all the circumstances (including place of shipment in relation to nearest source of supply).

13.3 Amounts reimbursed under the present section shall be recovered if the automobile is sold before the end of the appointment or assignment or within three years of its arrival at the duty station, whichever is earlier, unless in the opinion of the Secretary-General the sale is justified by a need to replace the automobile, for example, as a result of wear and tear.

13.4 No reimbursement shall be made for the cost of transporting privately owned automobiles upon separation from service.

Section 14
Storage of personal effects and household goods under rule 107.27 (f)

14.1 Storage charges of personal effects and household goods under rule 107.27 (f) may be paid, provided that:

(a) The quantity of personal effects and household goods stored does not exceed the difference between the maximum allowance under rule 107.27 (d) (i) and the amount actually shipped under rule 107.21 (i);

(b) The charges do not extend beyond the five-year period following the effective date of the assignment. However, when a staff member's assignment is extended beyond five years for a period of up to two years at the same duty station, storage charges may continue to be paid for the period of such extension.

14.2 The charges to be paid shall include insurance coverage as provided in section 17.3 of the present instruction.

14.3 Storage charges shall not be paid in the case of mission or other assignments not involving a change of official duty station.

Section 15
Shipping arrangements and claims

In making their shipping arrangements and claims under part II of the present instruction, and in submitting requests for conversion of surface entitlements to air shipments, for split shipments, for transportation of privately owned automobiles or for storage, staff members shall follow the procedures set out in the information circular on excess baggage, shipments and insurance.

III. Insurance

Section 16
Conditions of entitlement

16.1 A staff member's insurance entitlements shall be in accordance with staff rules 107.22, 207.21 and 307.7, and the provisions of the present instruction.

16.2 Where storage of personal effects and household goods under rule 107.27 (f) has been authorized, the Organization shall also pay the cost of insurance. Storage insurance related to the shipment while in transit is not included in the insurance entitlement, except when the Secretary-General determines that such storage is directly incidental to the transportation of the consignment.

16.3 In the case of unaccompanied shipments under staff rules 107.21 (h), (i) and (j), 207.20 (i) and (j) and 107.27, the staff member shall furnish the Organization, prior to shipment, with an itemized inventory of all articles, including containers such as suitcases, and the replacement value in United States dollars of each article in the shipments.

Section 17
Maximum insurance entitlements

17.1 The maximum insurance entitlement for unaccompanied shipments of staff serving under the 100 series of the Staff Rules appointed or assigned for less than one year, project personnel serving under the 200 series in short-term status and staff serving under the 300 series shall be $1,600.

17.2 The maximum insurance entitlement for unaccompanied shipments of staff members under the 100 series appointed or assigned for a year longer and of project personnel under the 200 series in intermediate or long-term status shall be:

(a) $16,000 for the individual staff member or project personnel;

(b) $8,000 for the first eligible family member; and

(c) $4,800 for each additional eligible family member.

17.3 For removal shipments under rule 107.27, inclusive of any advance shipment under rule 107.21 (j), the maximum insurance coverage shall be:

(a) $80,000 for a staff member without a spouse or dependent child; or

(b) $130,000 for a staff member with a spouse or dependent child.

17.4 The maximum insurance entitlement defined in section 17.3 above shall also apply to cover both the personal effects and household goods that may be stored in accordance with staff rule 107.27 (f) and the personal effects and household goods that may be shipped under staff rule 107.21 (i).

17.5 The insurance coverage provided under sections 17.1, 17.2 and 17.3 above shall not include articles of special value for which special premium rates are charged. In such cases the cost above the normal premium for insuring standard items is payable by the staff member even if he or she is within the overall insurance entitlement.

Section 18
Additional insurance coverage requirement

Staff members who are subject to national income taxation in respect of their United Nations salaries are required to have additional insurance coverage for the difference between the full value and the coverage provided by the United Nations under section 17 of the present instruction for their personal effects and household goods while in transit or in storage.

Section 19
Insurance arrangements and claims

19.1 In making their insurance arrangements and claims under part III of the present instruction, staff members shall follow the procedures set out in the information circular on excess baggage, shipments and insurance issued by the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services.

19.2 Claims are payable at the rate in effect at the time of settlement.

Section 20
Final provisions

20.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on 1 January 2007.

20.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/1999/15 of 23 November 1999 is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Christopher B. **Burnham**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

Notes

[1] ST/AI/2000/6, as amended by ST/AI/2000/6/Amend.1.

[2] "Split shipments" within the meaning of the present instruction refers to two consignments: (a) originating from one location but destined to two locations; (b) originating from two locations but destined to one location; or (c) originating from two locations and destined to two locations, as authorized under section 11.2.